



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's CE Primary School, Rawtenstall

Address Haslingden Old Road, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, United Kingdom, BB4 8RZ

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Overall grade **Good**

The impact of collective worship **Good**

School's vision

Loving, learning, community. We provide quality first teaching in a loving Christian environment where everyone is respected and valued as a unique child of God, whilst retaining a respect for other faiths. We will promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all pupils, within a caring, loving environment. John 10:10 1 Corinthians 13:4

Key findings

- The school's vision for providing a loving Christian environment results in an inclusive and caring community. Productive relationships are based on Christian values. There is deep respect between people of different faiths. Pupils and adults flourish as a result of strong pastoral support.
- Leaders readily relate their practice to the school's Christian vision. However, not all leaders and staff fully understand expectations for a church school. This means that monitoring and evaluation is not always rigorous and does not always effectively inform further development.
- The vision for equipping all 'to live life in all its fullness' results in a broad and rich curriculum. However, there is no shared understanding of spiritual development. As result, there is no co-ordinated planning to secure spiritual development across the curriculum.
- Collective worship is important to the school and challenges all to put Christian values into practice. A significant strength is the way in which collective worship fully involves Muslim pupils whilst respecting their beliefs.
- Religious education (RE) makes a rich contribution to character development. It helps pupils to disagree well.

Areas for development

- Provide training for all leaders and staff in expectations for church schools, to effectively support further development of the school's Christian character, collective worship and RE.
- Ensure that systems for planning, monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school are embedded within the school's development cycle. This so that the views of all members of the community, including pupils, accurately inform development planning.
- Develop a shared understanding of spiritual development so that planning for this enriches all aspects of the curriculum and collective worship.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

St Mary's is a loving and caring community where every individual is valued. The vision for a community based on love, as explained by Paul in Corinthians, is lived out by the headteacher and other leaders. It drives their shared commitment to overcoming barriers to learning and providing the best possible learning experiences for all. Christian values are deeply embedded in every aspect of school life and result in very strong relationships. A strength of the school is the seamless integration of pupils from different backgrounds and faiths. There is a culture of respect for difference. As a result, behaviour is exemplary. There is a calm working environment in which all pupils, including vulnerable pupils, flourish both academically and personally. Staff speak warmly of the way they are supported during difficult times. Parents respect the way in which the school goes 'above and beyond' to support their families.

The commitment to overcoming barriers to flourishing is transformational. There is very strong provision for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The vision informs budget decisions which secure effective support for mental health and wellbeing. The way in which staff work together with the ASPIRE team ensures that effective systems are in place to identify and support pupils facing difficulties. This commitment to overcoming barriers also resulted in high levels of practical and emotional support for all members of the school community during the pandemic. Families respect the time taken by staff to make phone calls to them. Food parcels and access to digital technology helped to secure access to learning for all. Staff isolating at home say they still felt part of the community due to the support they received. Consultation with parents is key to ensuring there is parental support for what the school offers. Careful consultation recently took place on relationships and sex education. The detailed information available helps parents understand the school's commitment to securing dignity and respect for all.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Christian vision does not always lead to effective development planning. There is some monitoring of worship and RE, and this has resulted in the school making some improvements. Governors carry out monitoring visits, although these have recently been limited by pandemic. The views of pupils are not always explored in depth. Systems are not in place to ensure that routine self-evaluation feeds into development of the school as a church school. There has been limited training to support the development of the school as a church school. The partnership with the Diocese has supported some training for RE, which has provided some good support for teachers. However, there has been little training for leaders or staff, including governors, in collective worship, character development or other issues relating to church school development. Consequently, where monitoring has taken place, it has not always been rooted in a deep understanding of expectations for church schools. As a result, some significant development points have been missed and potential for further improvement is not always recognised.

The vision for enabling all to live 'life in all its fullness' informs planning for an exciting curriculum which equips pupils as they move forward on their journey through life. It drives the school to aspire to highest standards of learning and teaching. Supporting two leaders to share their expertise in Maths education on a national basis is seen as an outworking of the Christian vision. The vision drives the school's commitment to making the best possible use of digital technology. Familiarity with digital learning was an immense benefit to remote learning during the pandemic. The rich curriculum engages pupils and provides memorable learning experiences. Some staff grasp opportunities for spiritual development, for example, reflecting on poetry, taking time for awe and wonder or thinking about big questions in science. However, there is no shared understanding of spiritual development. Lack of training limits understanding of the potential for further development in this area.

Collective worship is valued by pupils and adults. The way in which it supports and challenges Muslim pupils, whilst respecting their beliefs and integrity, is a significant strength. The Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) team is central to this. This group includes pupils from a variety of backgrounds, including Christian and Muslim families. They talk about their shared values and different beliefs. The half-termly focus value and values awards inform worship planning and result in pupils talking confidently about Christian values and their biblical roots. As a result, pupils aspire to live by the school's values. There are some opportunities for pupils to participate in worship, for example, by writing prayers. When pupils are fully involved in collective worship, as when Year 6 led Christingle worship, it makes a significant impact on them. A Muslim pupil talked about how she valued learning about Christian beliefs and practices through this experience. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for leading worship.

The strong partnership with the church enriches worship. Support from the local Methodist minister and from St Mary's church members ensures that this partnership is maintained whilst the church is without a permanent vicar. However, formal monitoring of collective worship is limited. The quality and regularity of class worship are not consistent, but this has not been picked up by monitoring. In part, this is because staff not been trained to lead class worship or to plan for spiritual development within class worship.

Pupils are compassionate and generously support charities. The GIFT team and the school council lead this and explain some of their reasons for choosing to help others. However, they do not have a deep understanding of the concept of justice. There are limited opportunities for them to act as agents of change.

RE makes a strong contribution to character development. It effectively supports pupils' understanding of different beliefs and helps them to disagree well. The passionate RE leader shares her enthusiasm for the subject with pupils and staff. Training on resources from Understanding Christianity was warmly received. The RE curriculum is carefully designed with regard to the school's context and consequently includes a focus on Islam in every year group. It is well-balanced in terms of the proportion of time spent on Christianity and different faiths. Pupils enjoy RE and discuss their differing beliefs and world views in an atmosphere of respect.

St Mary's is a loving school family which prioritises both academic flourishing and personal wellbeing. As a result, it is a community where all flourish and are well-supported to live life in all its fullness.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	09/03/2022	URN	119368
Date of previous inspection	26/06/2015		
School status	Voluntary Controlled	NOR	199
Name of MAT/Federation			
Diocese / Methodist District	Manchester		
Headteacher	Neil Gurman		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	The number of pupils with EAL is above national averages. Many pupils are from Muslim families with an Asian heritage. The local church has been without a permanent vicar since 2019.		
Inspector's name	Carol Berry	No.	324